

Claims

1. A method for encapsulating leadframe items each comprising an IC mounted on a leadframe, the method comprising:
 - 5 loading pellets of plastics material from a pellet holder into a pellet dispenser;
 - conveying one or more leadframe items to a mould;
 - dispensing at least one pellet of plastics material from the pellet dispenser; and
 - 10 moulding the plastics material of the at least one dispensed pellet around the leadframe;
 - wherein the method further comprises at least one step of removing dust of the plastics material from the pellet holder.
- 15 2. A method according to claim 1 in which the step of removing the plastics dust includes brushing the pellet holder.
3. A method according to claim 1 in which the step of removing plastics dust includes applying a vacuum source to the pellet holder.
- 20 4. A method for encapsulating leadframe items each comprising an IC mounted on a leadframe, the method comprising:
 - loading pellets of plastics material into a pellet dispenser;
 - conveying one or more leadframe items into a mould;
 - 25 dispensing at least one pellet of plastics material from the pellet dispenser; and
 - moulding the plastics material of the at least one dispensed pellet around the leadframe;
 - wherein the method further comprises at least one step of removing
 - 30 dust of the plastics material from the pellet dispenser.
5. A method according to claim 4 in which the step of removing the plastics dust includes brushing the pellet dispenser.

6. A method according to claim 4 in which the step of removing plastics dust includes applying a vacuum source to the pellet dispenser.
7. A method for encapsulating leadframe items each comprising an IC
5 mounted on a leadframe, the method comprising:
conveying one or more leadframe items to a mould;
dispensing at least one pellet of plastics material; and
moulding the plastics material of the dispensed pellet around the
leadframe;
10 wherein the leadframe is conveyed to the mould while exposed to a
pressure source whereby dust of the plastics material is removed from the
leadframe.
8. A method according to claim 7 in which the pressure source is a
15 vacuum source.
9. A method for encapsulating leadframe items each comprising an IC
mounted on a leadframe, the method comprising:
displacing a door from a first position in which the door closes a
20 moulding region to a second position in which the door does not close the
moulding region, thereby opening a path to the moulding region;
conveying one or more leadframe items along the path to a mould
located in the moulding region;
returning the door to the first position;
25 dispensing at least one pellet of plastics material; and
moulding the plastics material of the dispensed pellet around the
leadframe item.
10. A method for encapsulating leadframe items each comprising an IC
30 mounted on a leadframe, the method comprising:
conveying one or more leadframe items to a mould;
dispensing at least one pellet of plastics material; and
moulding the plastics material of the dispensed pellet around the
leadframe;

wherein the method further comprises using a brush member to brush at least one surface of the mould to remove dust of the plastics material from the mould.

5 11. A method according to claim 10 following the brushing, dust is removed from the brush by applying a vacuum source to the brush.

12. A system for encapsulating leadframe items each comprising an IC mounted on a leadframe, the system comprising:

10 a pellet holder for holding pellets of plastics material;
a pellet dispenser for receiving the pellets from the pellet holder and dispensing them to a mould;
a conveyor for conveying at least one leadframe item to the mould;
means for moulding the plastics material of the at least one dispensed
15 pellet around the leadframe; and
a cleaning device for removing dust of the plastics material from the pellet holder.

20 13. A system according to claim 12 in which the cleaning device includes a brush member for brushing the pellet holder.

14. A method according to claim 12 in which the cleaning device includes a vacuum source.

25 15. A system for encapsulating leadframe items each comprising an IC mounted on a leadframe, the system comprising:

a conveyor for conveying one or more leadframe items to a mould;
a pellet dispenser for dispensing at least one pellet of plastics material to the mould;
30 means for moulding the plastics material of the at least one dispensed pellet around the leadframe; and
at least one cleaning device for removing dust of the plastics material from the pellet dispenser.

16. A system according to claim 15 in which the cleaning device includes a brush for brushing the pellet dispenser.

17. A system according to claim 15 in which the cleaning device includes a vacuum source.

18. A system for encapsulating leadframe items each comprising an IC mounted on a leadframe, the system comprising:

a conveyor for conveying at least one leadframe item to a mould;
10 a pellet dispenser for dispensing at least one pellet of plastics material;
means for moulding the plastics material of the dispensed pellet around the leadframe; and
a pressure source;
the conveyor including a cover in communication with the pressure
15 source and for covering the leadframe item whereby dust of the plastics material is removed from the leadframe item.

19. A system according to claim 18 in which the pressure source is a vacuum source.

20. A system for encapsulating leadframe items each comprising:

a door;
an actuator for displacing the door from a first position in which the door closes a moulding region to a second position in which the door does not
25 close the moulding region, thereby opening a path to the moulding region;
a conveyor for conveying at least one leadframe item along the path to a mould located in the moulding region;
a pellet dispenser for dispensing at least one pellet of plastics material;
means for moulding the plastics material of the dispensed pellet
30 around the leadframe; and
a controller arranged to control the actuator to displace the door from the first position to the second position when the conveyor is to operate, and otherwise to control the actuator to displace the door from the second to the first position.

21. A system for encapsulating leadframe items each comprising an IC mounted on a leadframe, the system comprising:

- a conveyor for conveying one or more leadframe items to a mould;
- 5 a pellet dispenser for dispensing at least one pellet of plastics material;
- means for moulding the plastics material of the dispensed pellet around the leadframe;
- a brush member arranged to brush at least one surface of the mould to
- 10 remove dust of the plastics material from the mould.

22. A system according to claim 21 further including a vacuum source arranged to suck dust from the brush.